

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 06409 010533Z

11

ACTION EA-09

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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CINCPAC HONOLULU

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, MY

SUBJ: DOMESTIC POLITICAL CHANGES: MUSTAPHA GONE,
HARUN GOING?

1. SUMMARY. SABAH'S LEGENDARY CHIEF MINISTER
TUN MUSTAPHA RETIRED FROM OFFICIAL LIFE OCTOBER 31
LEAVING HIS PROTEGE TAN SRI MOH. KERUAK IN HIS PLACE.
KUALA LUMPUR PAPERS NOV 1 SURFACED LONG RUMORED
OFFER OF UN PERM REP POSITION TO POWERFUL SELANGOR
CHIEF MIN AND UMNO YOUTH CHIEF DATO JAHU HARUN IDRIS.
BOTH CHANGES ARE EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING EFFORT BY
PRIME MINISTER RAZAK AND HIS SUPPORTERS TO NEUTRALIZE
ALTERNATIVE POWER CENTERS WITHIN RULING UMNO PARTY.
END SUMMARY.

2. ALL NEWSPAPERS NOV 1 FRONT-PAGED RETIREMENT
FROM OFFICIAL LIFE OF TUN DATU HAJI MUSTAPHA BIN
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DATU HARUN, CHIEF MINISTER OF SABAH SINCE JUNE 1967

AND A POTENT FORCE, BECAUSE OF HIS WEALTH AND DRIVING ENERGY, BOTH IN SABAH AND IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA. HE HAS BEEN SUCCEEDED BY THE FORMER DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER, TAN SRI MOHAMED SAID KERUAK, A LOYAL SUPPORTER, BUT IS RETAINING HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE UNITED SABAH NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (USNO) WHICH CONTROLS THE STATE GOVT AND THE SABAH ALLIANCE. IN HIS RETIREMENT SPEECH, MUSTAPHA, WHO IS REPUTED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE OR TEN WEALTHIEST MEN IN ASIA AS A RESULT OF HIS SUCCESS IN MANIPULATING SABAH TIMBER CONCESSIONS AND OTHER ECONOMIC MONOPOLIES IN THE STATE, DECLINED THE M\$3,500 (APPROX US\$1,375) MONTHLY LIFETIME PENSION AWARDED HIM BY A GRATEFUL LEGISLATURE BUT ACCEPTED PERQUISITES INCLUDING A HOUSE, GOVT CAR, BODYGUARDS, POLICE OUTFITTERS, AND THE RIGHT TO FLY THE FLAG OF SABAH, USNO, OR "ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY HE CHOOSES."

3. PRESS ALSO REPORTED INTERVIEW FROM SABAH WITH SELANGOR CHIEF MINISTER DAO HAJI HARUN IDRIS WHO CONFIRMED HE HAS BEEN OFFERED POST OF MALAYSIAN PER REP TO UN, A POSITION CURRENTLY HELD BY AMB TO U.S. KHIR JOHARI. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, HARUN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT RECENT RUMORS HE HAD BEEN OFFERED THE UN POST WERE TRUE BUT THAT HE HAD NOT MADE A FINAL DECISION. HARUN WAS FIRST ATTACKED IN 1973-74 BY STUDENTS WHO ACCUSED HIM OF CORRUPTION IN AWARDED LICENSES TO TIMBER AN AREA WHERE THE NEW CAMPUS OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY WAS TO BE BUILT (BANGI). THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY OTHER CHARGES AND AN INVESTIGATION OF HIS PERSONAL FINANCES BY THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) WAS BEGUN. PRIME MINISTER RAZAK CLEARLY HOPED TO USE THE NBI INVESTIGATION TO REMOVE HARUN PRIOR TO THE AUGUST 1974 GENERAL ELECTION, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF THE LATTER'S STRONG HOLD ON THE SELANGOR UMNO PARTY STRUCTURE AND ON THE ACTIVIST UMNO YOUTH ORGANIZATION. THE NATIONAL PRESS SERVICE (BERNAMA) STORY ON HARUN FROM SABAH NOTED THAT HE HAD ANNOUNCED HE WILL NOT RPT NOT SEEK RE-ELECTION

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PAGE 03 KUALA 06409 010533Z

TO THE UMNO YOUTH PRESIDENCY NEXT YEAR.

4. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH IT IS CLEAR THAT NEITHER MUSTAPHA NOR HARUN SHOULD BE COUNTED OUT AT THIS POINT, THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE GONE A LONG WAY TOWARD NEUTRALIZING THE TWO MEN IN THE COUNTRY WHO HAVE PERSONAL POLITICAL POWER RIVALING HIS OWN.

UNDERHILL

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